

# TEXAS SUPREME COURT

									
	Jane Bland	Nathan Hecht	Jeffrey Boyd	Brett Busby	Paul Green	Eva Guzman	Debra Lehrmann	Jimmy Blacklock	John Devine
Confidence Score	Strong Republican	Strong Republican	Strong Republican	Strong Republican	Mild Republican	Strong Republican	Strong Republican	Strong Republican	Strong Republican
Opinion Partners									
Dissenting Minority									
Determining Majority									
Lone Dissenter									

- ▶ Number of justices: **9**
- ▶ Number of cases: **90**
- ▶ Percentage of cases with a unanimous ruling: **82.2% (74)**
- ▶ Justice most often writing the majority opinion: **Justices Bland and Busby (10 each)**
- ▶ Per curiam decisions: **28**
- ▶ Concurring opinions: **11**
- ▶ Justice with most concurring opinions: **Justices Guzman and Blacklock (3 each)**
- ▶ Dissenting opinions: **17**
- ▶ Justice with most dissenting opinions: **Justice Boyd (6)**

## COURT CONTENTION

### Opinion partners

In 2020, five cases before the Texas Supreme Court were decided 7-2. No justices dissented frequently enough to be considered opinion partners. Justices Green and Hecht dissented together twice, which was more than any other two justices. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study, Green recorded a Mild Republican Confidence Score and Hecht recorded a Strong Republican Confidence Score.

### **Dissenting minority**

In 2020, one case before the Texas Supreme Court was decided by split decision. In that case, Justices Boyd, Devine, Guzman, and Hecht were in the minority, all of whom recorded Strong Republican Confidence Scores in our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study.

### **Determining majority**

Because no majority formed frequently enough, it is not possible to discern a determining majority with the data from 2020. The justices who ruled in the majority were Justices Blacklock, Bland, Busby, Lehrman, and Green. In our *Ballotpedia Courts: State Partisanship* study Blacklock, Bland, Busby, and Lehrman recorded Strong Republican Confidence Scores. Justice Green recorded a Mild Republican Confidence Score.

### **Lone dissenter**

In 2020, there was a lone dissenter in five cases before the Texas Supreme Court. No justice dissented alone frequently enough to be considered a lone dissenter. Justices Boyd and Devine each dissented alone twice.

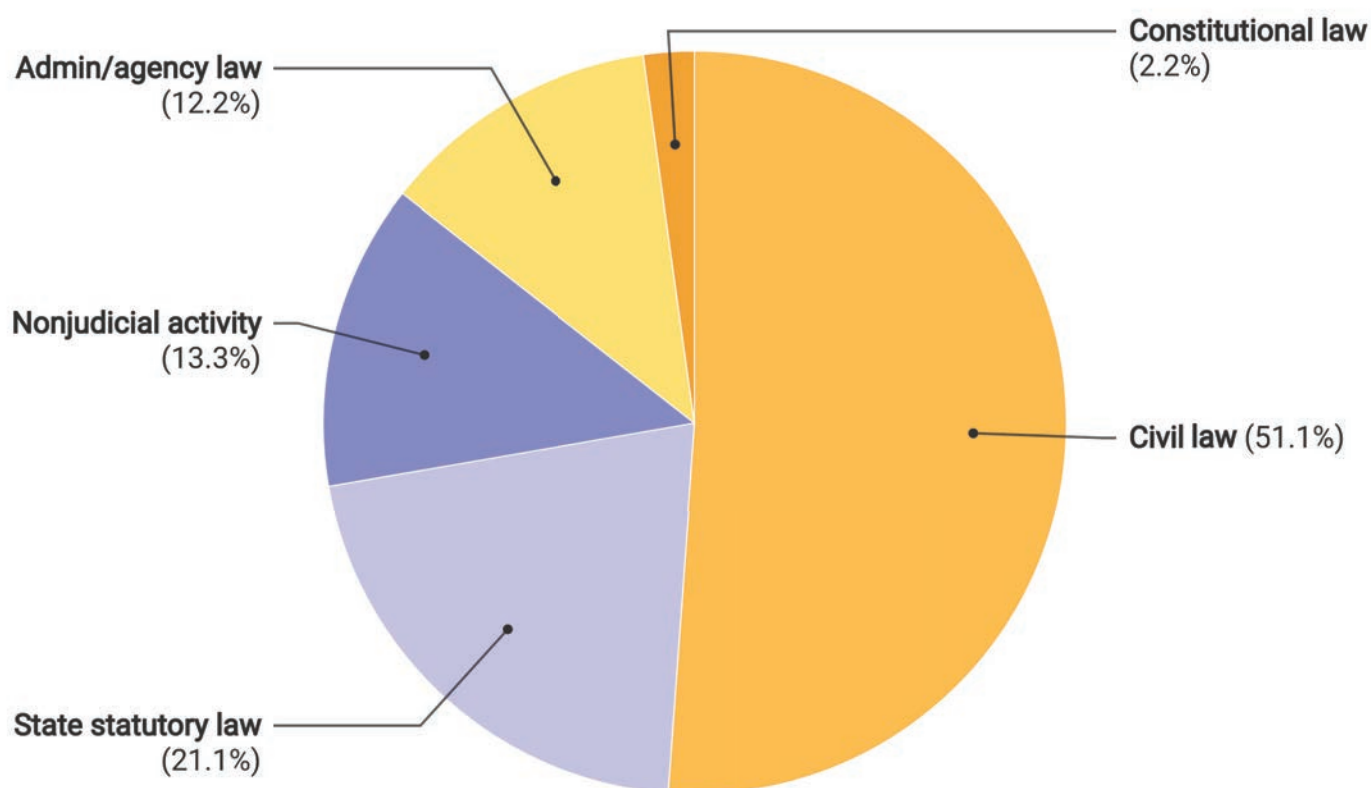
## **COURT JURISDICTION**

The Texas Supreme Court has jurisdiction over all civil cases, while the Court of Criminal Appeals exercises discretionary review over criminal cases. The caseload of the Texas Supreme Court is determined by whether the court decides to grant a review of a judgment. The court has mandatory jurisdiction over writs of mandamus and habeas corpus.

Much of the supreme court's time is spent determining which petitions for review will be granted, as it must consider all petitions for review that are filed. The court usually takes only those cases that present the most significant Texas legal issues in need of clarification.

The supreme court also has jurisdiction to answer questions of state law certified from a federal appellate court; has original jurisdiction to issue writs and to conduct proceedings for the involuntary retirement or removal of judges; and reviews cases involving attorney discipline upon appeal from the Board of Disciplinary Appeals of the State Bar of Texas.

## Case types decided by Texas Supreme Court, 2020



**BALLOT**PEDIA

The most common cases heard by the Texas Supreme Court in 2020 were civil law cases. Of the 90 cases it heard, 46 were civil law cases, or 51.5 percent of its total caseload for the year. A civil case is one that involves a dispute between two parties, one of whom seeks reparations or damages.

The second most common cases that reached the supreme court were state statutory cases. A state statutory case involves the violation or enforcement of a state statute. The Texas Supreme Court heard 19 state statutory law cases in 2020, or 21.1 percent of its total caseload for the year.

The third most common cases that reached the court were nonjudicial activity. A case is considered nonjudicial activity if it does not involve a formal hearing and discussion before the court. The Texas Supreme Court heard 12 nonjudicial activity cases in 2020, or 13.3 percent of its total caseload for the year.